Disinvestment of SCI

*385. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry approved disinvestment of the Shipping Corporation of India;

(b) if so, how much of the total stakes would be disinvested; and

(c) the purpose of disinvestment in SCI?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) No decision has been taken with respect to disinvestment in Shipping Corporation of India Limited.

Promotion of Tourism

*386. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether new initiatives and marketing strategies have been formulated by Government for promotion of tourism during 2005-06;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government for increasing the number of tourists and ensuring them safety in our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Marketing and promotion of tourism in India is a continuous and ongoing activity of the Ministry of Tourism. The new domestic and global promotional compaigns for the current year focus on India as a destination for niche segments like Medical Tourism, Rural Tourism, Cruise Tourism, Spiritual Tourism, Conferences & Conventions, etc. The aim is to expand the range of the tourism products in India, both for the domestic and international consumers.

(c) The Ministry of Tourism, through the India tourism offices overseas, undertakes a series of promotional activities in tourist generating markets overseas for increasing the number of tourists visiting India. These include advertising, participation in fairs and exhibitions, organizing seminars, workshops and road shows, publication of brochures, joint advertising

support and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

Safety of tourists is generally a State subject and the Ministry of Tourism has advised the State Governments/Union Territories for the deployment of Tourism Police at important tourist centres/destinations to ensure the safety of tourists. The Ministry of Tourism has also launched capacity building programmes for service providers and stakeholders to make them aware of the benefits of the tourism and the need to treat tourists with care and courtesy, under the 'Atithi Devo Bhavah' campaign.

Development of surrounding areas

*387. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state, the percentage of profit made by Oil India Ltd./ONGC invested for the all round development of the area surrounding their project area in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) Oil India Ltd. (OIL) and OIL & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) have been undertaking socio-economic development programme (SEDP) for the all round development of areas surrounding their projects in various States including the State of Assam. As responsible public sector undertakings (PSUs), both companies have made it their corporate policy to earmark 0.75% of their profit after tax towards such programmes. OIL and ONGC have spent Rs. 16.39 crore and Rs. 4.72 crore respectively during the last three years towards these programmes in the State of Assam.

Air services in North East

*388. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the people of Tripura, particularly the students from Tripura pursuing studies in other States of the North-East are facing great troubles for not having air-flights between Agartala and Silchar and Agartala and Imphal;